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SECOND ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

NEGATIVE BURN

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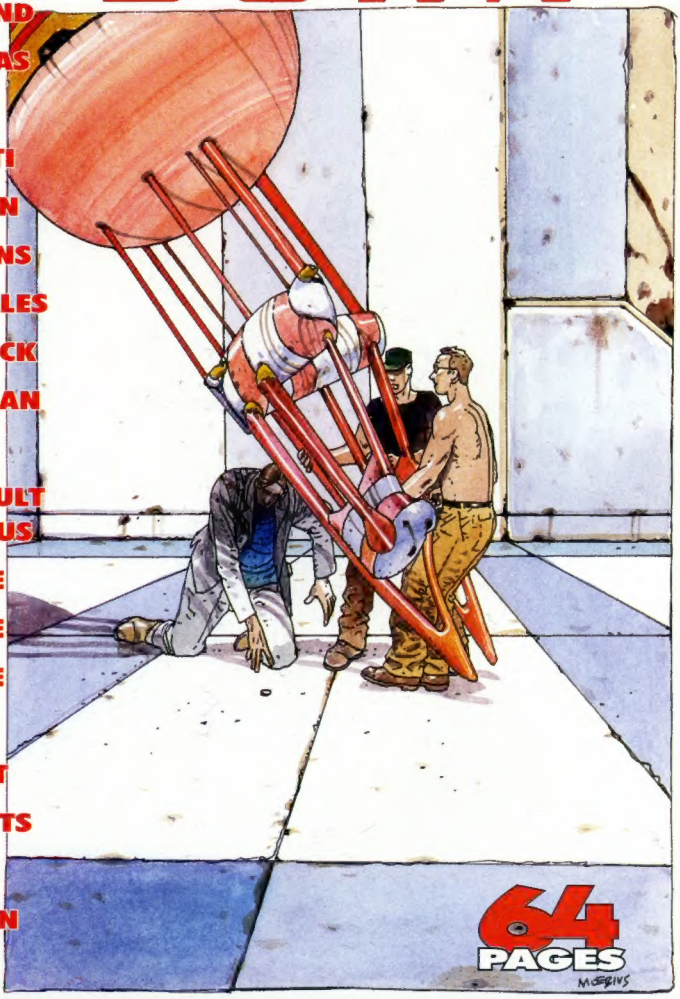
TERI S. WOOD



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Joe Pruett ~ Editor

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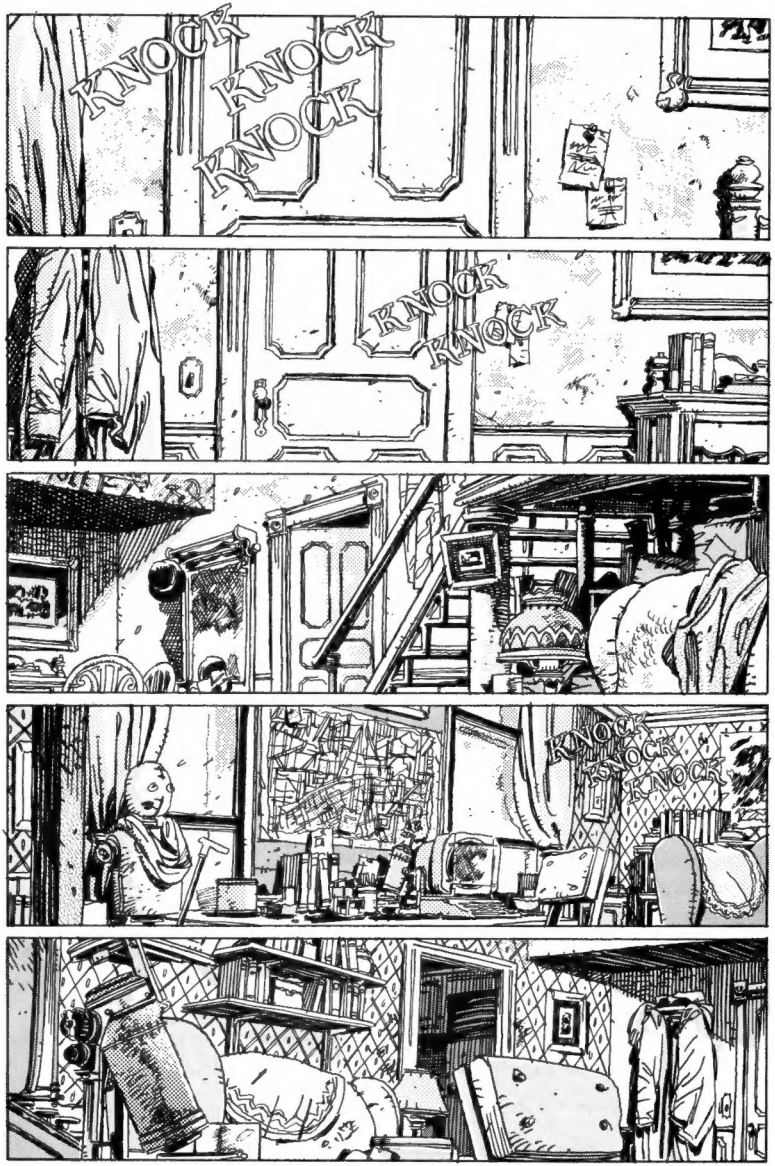
BAKER STREET

"THE EMPTY HOUSE"

Written and Illustrated by Guy Davis

Co-Creator and Editor Gary Reed

Lettered by Vincent Locke

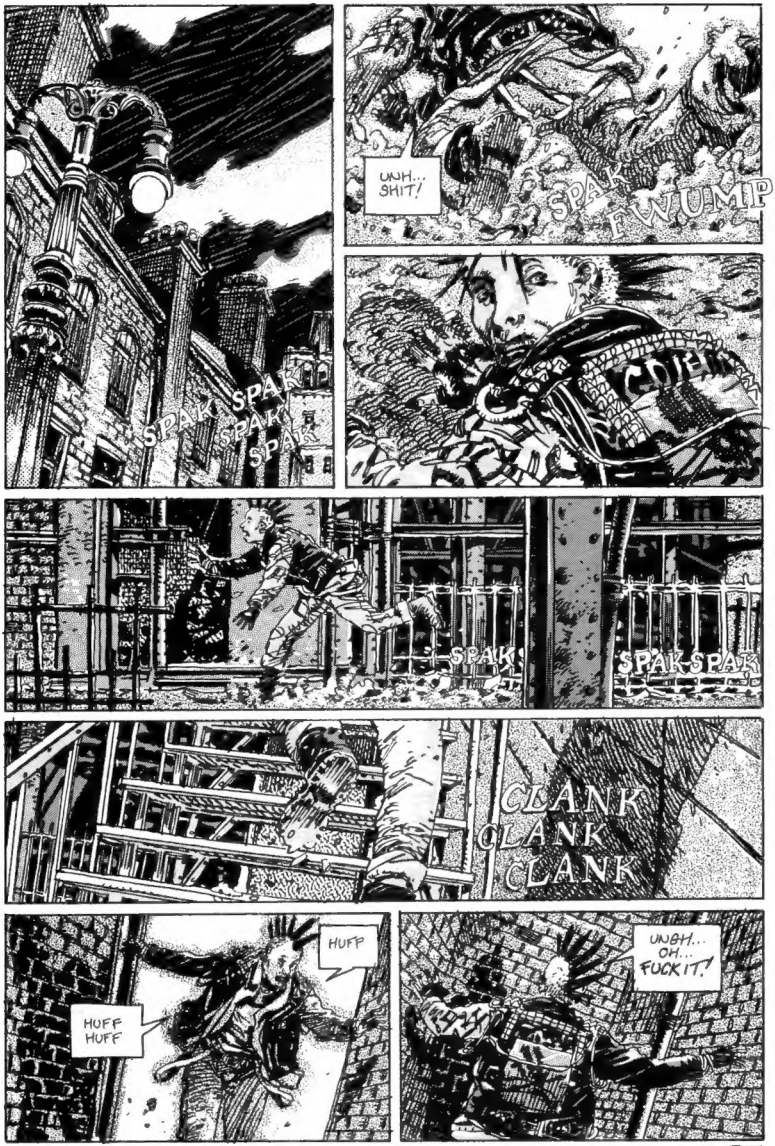

KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK

I TOLD YOU SHE WEREN'T 'ERE.
KNOCK
WOT THE FUCK! SINCE WHEN DOES SHE BUGGER OFF WITHOUT TELLIN' US?
YOU WANT TO GO SEE TOBY 'BOUT IT? HE SHOULD BE WITH THE REST OF THE 'RREGULARS AT--
SOD THAT SHIT! WHY'S SHE ALWAYS LEAVING 'IM IN CHARGE, EY?
'CAUSE YOU'RE ALWAYS BUNKIN' OFF EVERY TIME SHE--
'ERE, DON'T GIVE ME NO STICK 'BOUT THIS. WE DON'T NEED THEM. WE'LL DO THIS OURSELVES, SHOW 'ARLEQUIN AND ALL. YOU COP THAT?
It is with a certain nostalgia that I look back to my times on Baker Street. A time of growing and discovery amongst the backdrops of murder and pain.
It all started when I had left the Americas in hopes of furthering my studies in medicine at London's Wisteria University.
Unfortunately, my school work started to take second place to the adventures I had been thrust into and I eventually found myself spending more time writing about it all than studying.
IRREGULARS
To save on money, I thought I would take a job keeping house in exchange for room and board. Instead I ended up taking part in the mysteries of my housemates as they solved crimes around the punk quarter of London.
The punk quarter was a life I had never known, a life that I would soon claim as home. But for my housemate Sharon Ford, or "Harlequin" as the gangs knew her, it was a world that fed her appetite for mystery and deduction, and more often than not got me into trouble.

Now those troubles seemed a world away, or at least as many miles as I could put between them. It was one of the few times I could actually get Sharon away from Baker Street and the mysteries that ruled her life.
But after the "Ripper" case and its awful conclusion, it was a needed vacation for us both.
For Sharon, it was a time filled with the memories of pain and regret over the loss of her lover and our roommate, Sam.
For me, it was a chance to get to know the person that was an inspector, addict, punk lord and friend. A mystery hidden to herself that offered no easy solutions to my curiosity.
YOU KNOW, THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A VACATION.
WHAT?
I SAID, THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A VACATION. YOU KNOW, RELAX, GET YOUR MIND OFF THINGS.
I AM. I'M READING.
NO, YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT WHATEVER'S GOING ON BACK HOME. EITHER THE GANGS AT THE BOOKER VILLAS OR WHATEVER CASE FINDERS WORKING ON.

C'MON, SHAROU. I KNOW YOU WELL ENOUGH TO TELL THAT WHENEVER YOU START FROM THE BACK OF THE PAPER, YOU'RE PREOCCUPIED WITH SOMETHING BESIDES THE NEWS.
YES, WELL, WHO'S A CLEVER BOY THEN?
HEH. BLAME YOURSELF. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TAUGHT ME TO "OBSERVE ALL AND EVERYTHING" THAT EVEN THE SIMPLEST OF CURIOS--
ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT, SIR. IT'S A FAIR COP.
ACTUALLY, I WAS THINKING ABOUT LANGFORD AND HIS DAUGHTER'S MURDER.
I DON'T THINK THIS WAS A GOOD TIME TO LEAVE TOWN AND ALL.
YOU'LL NEVER THINK IT'S A GOOD TIME, BUT YOU NEED TO GET AWAY.
BESIDES, I THOUGHT YOU SAID THERE WAS NOTHING MORE YOU COULD DO ABOUT THE CASE. I MEAN, YOU GOT JIM CLEARED OF THE MURDER CHARGES. THIS WHOLE THING WAS JUST A SETUP FOR LANGFORD'S CANDIDACY TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS, AND HE TURNED OUT TO BE JUST AS INNOCENT TO THE MURDER AS JIM WAS.
WE KNEW WHY ABBY WAS MURDERED, BUT ONLY LANGFORD KNEW WHO DID IT.
SO, WHAT NOW? DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA WHO WAS BEHIND THIS ALL?

NO. AND GETTING ANOTHER CHANCE TO QUESTION 'IM ABOUT IT WILL BE MORE THAN DIFFICULT.
WHAT?
LANGFORD! OH MY GOD, HE'S BEEN MURDERED? BUT WE WERE JUST THERE... SIR WILLIAM LANGFORD, LOCAL CANDIDATE TO THE HOUSE, WAS FOUND MURDERED ON HIS ESTATE...
"CAUSE OF DEATH HAS BEEN DETERMINED AS STRANGULATION. THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF A BREAK-IN OR THEFT, AND IT IS THOUGHT THAT THIS MAY BE CONNECTED TO THE RECENT MURDER OF HIS DAUGHTER..."
WAIT; YOU DON'T THINK JIM...
NO I DON'T. JIM BLAMED ABBY'S FATHER FOR HER DEATH, BUT HE WASN'T MOTIVATED ENOUGH TO TAKE REVENGE ON IT. LANGFORD, HOWEVER, DID KNOW WHO THE KILLERS WERE.
OBVIOUSLY, KEEPING 'IM QUIET WAS OF MORE VALUE THAN HIS POSITION TO THE HOUSE. I HAVE A FEELING ALL THIS IS PART OF SOMETHING VERY COMPLICATED AND VERY SINISTER.
THIS ISN'T GOING TO WAIT TILL AFTER THE TRIP, IS IT?
WHO'S A CLEVER BOY...

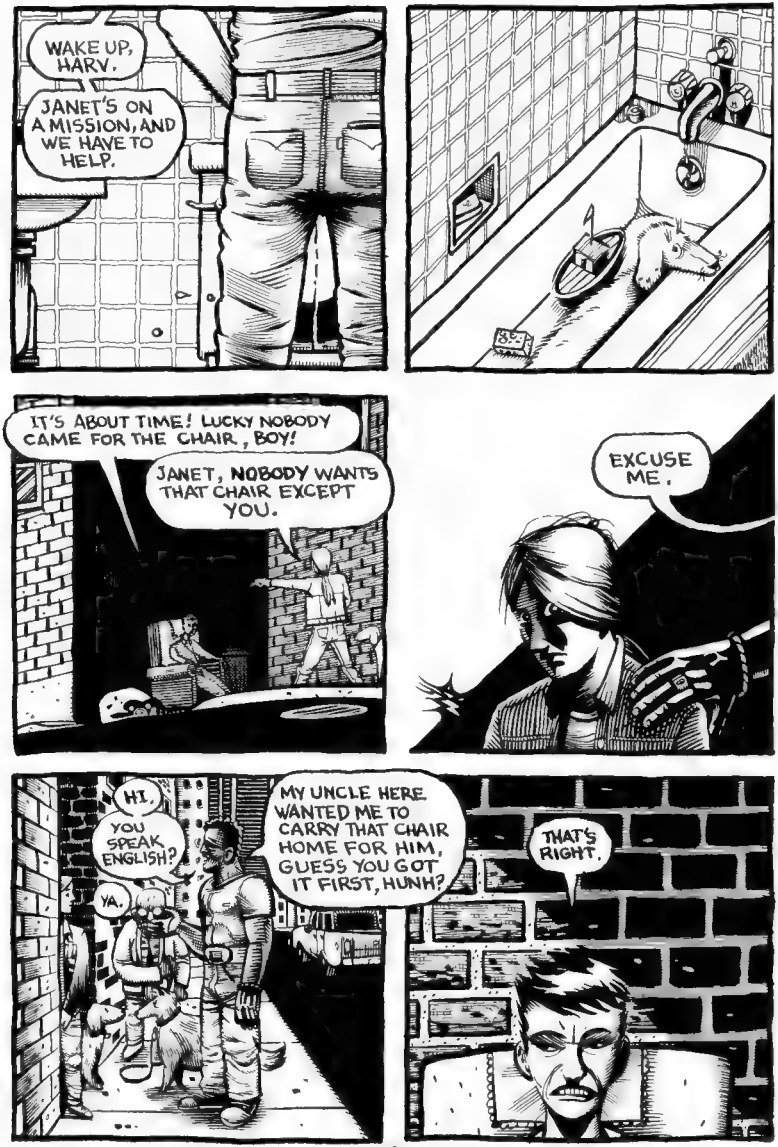

SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK
UNH... SHIT!
SPAK
T WUMP
CDIE
SPAK!
SPAK SPAK
CLANK CLANK CLANK
HUFF
HUFF HUFF
UNGH... OH... FUCK IT!

'RIGHT, RIGHT! LAY OFF THAT SHIT! CHRIST, YOU LOT ALWAYS LOOKIN' FOR AN EXCUSE TO FEEL M' COLLAR.
LOOK, I AIN'T DONE NOTHING! AIN'T I SPENT ENOUGH TIME AT THE NICK FOR YA TO COP THAT? GO ASK PINNER, I'M CLEAN!
'EAR ME? GO TALK TO Y' INSPECTOR BEFORE YOU GO TRYING TO PINCH--
BLAM

THE JAM
BEM 95
GORDIE?
WHA?
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW LONG YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING THAT VIDEO GAME?
NO.
HOW LONG?
SIX HOURS.

WHAT?!
NO WAY!
YOU HEARD ME.
MY GOD! I'VE JUST BEEN TELEPORTED 6 HOURS INTO THE FUTURE!
I LOVE IT!
HEY! SOMEONE'S THROWING OUT A BEAUTIFUL OLD CHAIR IN THE ALLEY ACROSS THE STREET!
AW, LEAVE IT!
OMIGOD! HE'S AFTER THE CHAIR!
MY CHAIR!
COME ON!
ZING!
I GOTTA PEE.

• WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY BERNIE MIREAULT. PLOT ASSIST BY KATHRYN DELANEY, WHO IS QUEEN OF GARBAGE PICKERS!


WAKE UP, HARV.
JANET'S ON A MISSION, AND WE HAVE TO HELP.
IT'S ABOUT TIME! LUCKY NOBODY CAME FOR THE CHAIR, BOY!
JANET, NOBODY WANTS THAT CHAIR EXCEPT YOU.
EXCUSE ME.
HI.
YOU SPEAK ENGLISH?
YA.
MY UNCLE HERE WANTED ME TO CARRY THAT CHAIR HOME FOR HIM, GUESS YOU GOT IT FIRST, HUNH?
THAT'S RIGHT.

C'MON, GORDIE, HELP ME CARRY THIS THING!
WE'RE TOO LATE!
NOW WHAT?!
CALM DOWN.
IT--IT WAS PERFECT!
I KNOW.
#@#%!
SOB
HEY!
ERCH!
I'M SUPPOSED TO PICK UP THAT CHAIR! PUT IT DOWN!
YOU'RE TOO LATE! I GOT HERE FIRST. GET LOST!
HEY! NICE WIG!

WOW, JANET! YOU'RE LIKE DIRTY HARRY.
MAKE MY DAY.
EXQUISITE ANTIQUES
753-8815
SCREEEEEEEEEEEEE!
LOOK, JUST HELP ME GET THIS BLOODY THING INDOORS BEFORE SOMETHING ELSE HAPPENS, OKAY?
OKAY! OKAY!
Y'KNOW, THIS HAS BEEN A REAL EYE-OPENER! I HAD NO IDEA THAT THIS LEVEL OF THE ECONOMY WAS SO ACTIVE. IT'S FIERCE!
YOU'RE MY HERO.
I KNOW.
BEMPS.

THE JAM
HI. I'M BERNIE MIREAULT. THE JAM IS SAFE AND SOUND.
THANKS TO THESE GUYS.
SEE YOU SOON.
CALIBER COMICS

KABUKI

MIRROR

IN LOVE.

WITH

MY OWN

_REFLECTION.

_REFLECTION

WE MET IN A TRAINING FACILITY OF THE NOH AGENCY.

BY DAVID MACK

KABUKI, SIAMESE and THE NOH and all related situations are trademark and copyright © 1995 David Mack

THEIR ANCESTORS WERE SURVIVORS OF THE BOMB AT NAGASAKI.

RADIATION HAD AFFECTED THE BLOODLINE.

IT WAS *RUMORED* THAT THEY HAD TELEPATHIC ABILITIES.

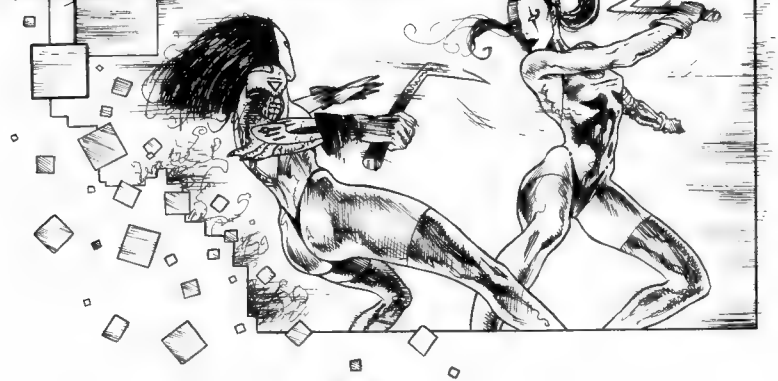
IN ANY CASE, THEY SAID NOTHING.

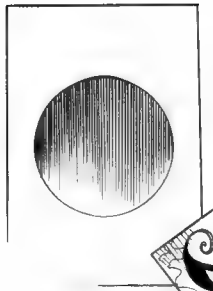
THEY SIMPLY BROKE INTO A VICIOUS SORT OF SPARRING.

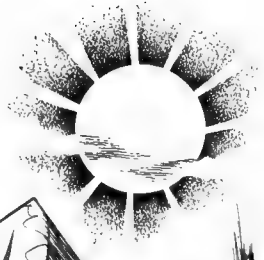
THE SITUATION WAS SHEER ABSURDITY.. LIKE ALICE IN WONDERLAND WITNESSING THE FIGHTING PARADOX OF TWEEDLEDUM AND TWEEDLEDEE.

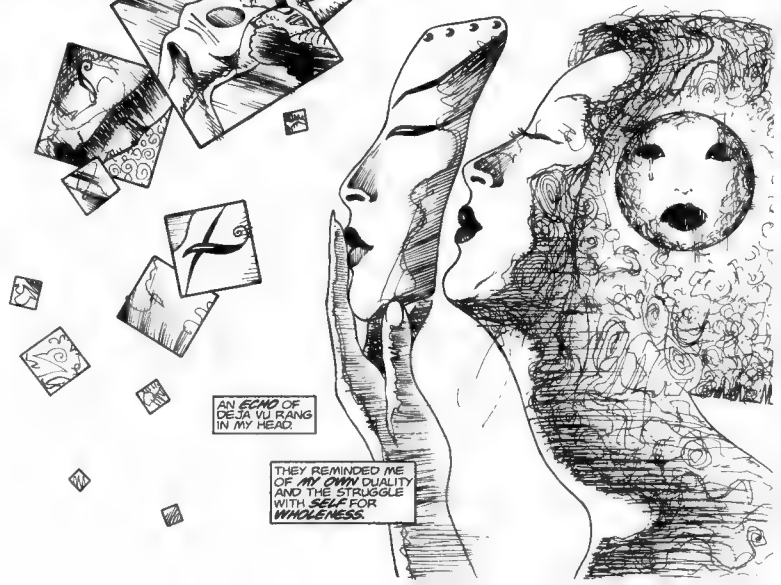
I MARVELED AT THEIR ATHLETIC FINESSE AND PHYSICAL REFINEMENTS.

THEY POSSESSED A DANCE-LIKE GRACE THAT I MYSELF CONSTANTLY STRUGGLED TO ATTAIN.









AN *ECHO* OF DEJA VU RANG IN MY HEAD.

THEY REMINDED ME OF *MY OWN* DUALITY AND THE STRUGGLE WITH *SELF* FOR *WHOLENESS*.

THE INSTRUCTOR TOLD ME THEY WERE BORN AS TWINS JOINED AT THE SHOULDER AND GIVEN BIOTECH LIMBS AT THE POINT OF SEPARATION.
SO.. THEY WERE PHYSICALLY FLAWED LIKE MYSELF. EACH OF US WERE PRODUCTS OF WAR AND SOCIAL OUTCASTS BECAUSE OF OUR DEFORMITIES.
I IMMEDIATELY BECAME INFATUATED WITH THEM BOTH AS A UNIT.
I FELT THEY WERE THE ONLY SOULS CAPABLE OF RELATING TO MY OWN PERSONALITY.

SECRETLY, I LONGED TO BE BETWEEN THEIR GRAPPLING ARMS.
THIS IS SOMETHING I HAVE TOLD NO ONE.
COULD ANYONE LOOK INTO MY DISFIGURED FACE AND RETURN MY AFFECTIONS?
INSTEAD, I AM CONTENT TO FALL IN LOVE...
...WITH MY OWN...
REFLECTION.

A Wee Little
Darklight
Preview!
by
TERI S. WOOD
CLAIRESE AND HER CHINESE FOOD.
WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE, CAT?
A DELIVERY BOY?
BUT I SUPPOSE I SHOULDN'T COMPLAIN.
IT DOES GET ME OUT OF THE HOUSE...
...AND OUT UNDER THAT LOVELY SKY.
AND UNDER THAT LOVELY, LOVELY MOON.

RRR!?RRRR.
OH PLEASE!
DO I LOOK LIKE SOMEONE WHO WOULD DO SOMETHING THAT WOULD RISK THE WRATH OF CLAIRESSE?
HEH HEH.
YOU DO HAVE A POINT.
BUT I'LL BE GOOD.
I WON'T BOTHER ANY OF THE POOR, LITTLE HUMANS.
HA!
PFT
HEL LO.
REALLY!

HEY, MAN! WE'RE COLLECTING DONATIONS.
YEAH, GOT ANY SPARE CHANGE.
CREDIT CARDS? JEWELRY?
KILL WHAT YOU EAT
EAT WHAT YOU KILL
MY! THIS COULD BE INTERESTING.
RRRR!
PFF MRR ROWL!
OH, PLEASE, CAT.
HAVE A LITTLE FAITH.
HEY! HE'S TALK'N TO HIS CAT, MAN!
THAT I AM!
AND A REMARKABLE LITTLE KITTY SHE IS, TOO.
YOU'D BE SURPRISED.
RIGHT! EMPTY YOUR POCKETS.
MY! THAT'S HARDLY A FRIENDLY ATTITUDE.
MRRROWL!
PFFT PFFT PFFT!
HISSS!
DON'T WORRY, CAT.
I'M COOL.
ANYWAY, KIDS, CAT HERE REMINDS ME THAT I CAN'T STAY AND PLAY.
CLAIRESE, MY BOSS...
...WOULD JUST HAVE A FIT.
SO, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I HAVE TO GET HOME BEFORE THE CHINESE FOOD CHILLS.
RRRRR!
HA HA, SHORTY.
EMPTY YOUR POCKETS!
"SHORTY?"
ROWL! RRRRR! PFFT!
DON'T MAKE ME STICK YOU.
WOULD'YA LOOK'IT THAT, CAT?
HE'S THREATENING ME WITH VIOLENCE
THAT'S REALLY NOT VERY NICE.
NOT AT ALL
YOU'RE ASKING FOR TROUBLE, MY YOUNG FRIENDS.

Oh? WHO ARE YOU?
RAMBO?
No.
Actually...
I'm a SHAPE-SHIFTER.
Peek-
-A-
-Boo!
YAAAAAAA!!!
EEEE!
Yuh...
HA! HA! DID YOU SEE THE LOOKS ON THEIR FACES?!! HA!
HA!
HA!
HA!
HEH! HEH!
HEH!
HOH!
UM....

Oh, COM'ON, CAT!
DID I HURT THEM?
D:D I?
RRRR.
Well.
Well.
THEY STARTED IT!
OH.
FOR PETE SAKE!
RAZZER FRAZZER~
~RAZZER~
~FRAZZ!
UM... ...YOU'RE...
..Uh..
..NOT GOING TO TELL CLARISSE,
..ARE YOU?
RRRMAOW!
YES!
YOU'RE A PAL, CAT.
The End

The Apparition
MY NAME IS ED
LIVE ON THE STREETS
DON'T GET ME WRONG, I WASN'T ALWAYS THIS WAY
I HAD A WIFE, A FAMILY, AND A JOB ONCE.
BUT, THAT WAS BEFORE...
it's all here, just like you asked
$ 100-
that's what you said isn't it?
that's what you told me.
well, THAT was the going rate YESTERDAY.
it done SHOT UP today, ed.
SEVEN DEADLY SINS
Story JAMES PRUETT
Art MATTHEW SMITH
MY NAME IS ED, AND I'M AN ADDICT.
DRUGS ARE A CURSE, AND AN EXPENSIVE HABIT
NOT TO MENTION THE SCUM THAT YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH.
how much MORE?!
don't fret, man... you just get a smaller stash, is all.
t-that's all i got, ramone. don't do this to me. i need it bad.
BUT WHEN YOU NEED A FIX, THERE AIN'T NOTHING YOU WON'T DO TO GET IT
just don't forget the inflation next time, my man.
the trades like the stock market, price is here one day, the next it's THERE.
it's just the business.
THEY'RE MY CRUTCH

mumble ... inflation
mumble ramble
THEY'VE DESTROYED MY LIFE
...
MY NAME IS ED, AND I'VE NEVER FELT SO ALONE.
THERE'S NO SOLACE FOR THE TRULY DESOLUTE.
NO MATTER HOW FAR YOU'VE FALLEN INTO THAT ENDLESS PIT, YOU CAN ALWAYS FALL FARTHER
ACID IS MY DRUG OF CHOICE.
THE ONLY PROBLEM IS THAT IT TAKES AWHILE TO KICK IN
BUT, MAN, WHEN IT DOES, IT CAN MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE A GOD.
IT CAN BE TOTAL EUPHORIA.
REVEALING EITHER A GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN...
Z

...OR HELL.
AAA
ohh...
please...
WHEN YOU'RE ON AN ACID TRIP, EVERYTHING IS SUDDENLY CLEAR
...EVERYTHING SEEMS TO MAKE SENSE.
3

please help me . . .
ALL DOUBTS ARE MAGICALLY REMOVED.
YOU SEE THINGS AND PEOPLE AS THEY TRULY ARE.
but that's all of the money i made tonight
guess it wasn't ENOUGH, huh?
someone has to keep me in the style of life i'm accustomed to. . .
ANGER
SMACK
THEIR DISGUISES FADE AWAY
THEIR INNER SPIRIT OR BEAST COMES FORTH.
GREED
REALITY IS A NEW, REVEALING EXPERIENCE
that's a real NICE car ya' got there, man.
what?
think you could let us take it for a little spin?
you can always say "no" . . .
ENVY
COVETOUSNESS

what's happening to me?
someone ...
please help me ...
nick? look at him ...
he's in a lot of pain ...
someone should take him to the hospital
oh come off it, nora ...
PRIDE
it's just an act to get more change for cheap wine ...
let's go before anyone sees us ...
but ...
no... please ...
ITALIA
ES
OPEN
SENSES BECOME INTENSELY AWARE.
5

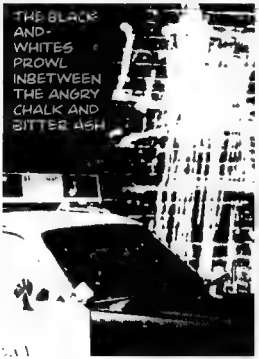
AND WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY..
..SMELL IS, PARTICULARLY ACUTE
THERE ARE THOSE THAT HAVE SO MUCH..
GLUTTONY
hey!
BAP
WHO DON'T HAVE A COMPASSIONATE BONE IN THEIR BODY.
get OUT of here!
PEOPLE ARE CONTROLLED BY THEIR INNER DESIRES
THEIR LUST CHAINS THEM.
oof ...
Koff ...
PEOPLE CAN'T SEE PAST THEMSELVES FOR THE KEY
6

AMAZING GRACE ...
...?
I HEAR THE VOICE
HOW SWEET THE SOUND ...
HAVE BEEN CALLED
that SAVED A WRETCH LIKE ME ...
AND AS I DRAW MY LAST BREATH I FINALLY FIND COMFORT...
WHEN I REALIZE I SHALL BE ALONE NO LONGER.
please ...
God ...
kaff ...
cough ...
forgive me ...
7

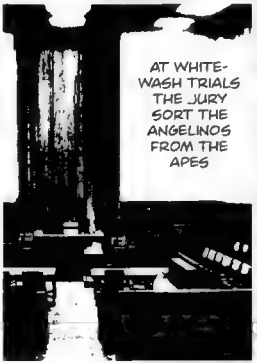
THROUGH MY DARKENED EYES I SEE HIS LIGHT.
A FACE AS ANCIENT AS THE STARS, YET EXUDES THE GENTLENESS AND INNOCENCE OF A CHILD
INSTANTLY, I KNOW HIS NAME
ADRIEL
I WELCOME HIS PRESENCE FOR HE IS MY DELIVERER
AND I FEEL AS IF I'M A NEW-BORN INFANT BEING CRADLED IN MY MOTHER'S ARMS AGAIN
EXCEPT THIS TIME IT'S MY FATHER'S
A REBIRTH
thank you...
oh, thank you...
A SALVATION
I ONCE WAS LOST BUT NOW I'M FOUND
PEACE
END

CHARISMA

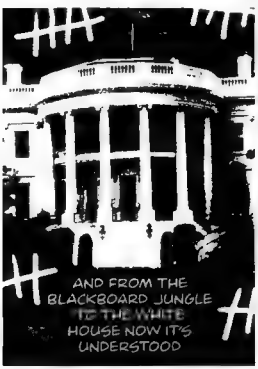
ALAN MOORE AND DAVE GIBBONS 1995

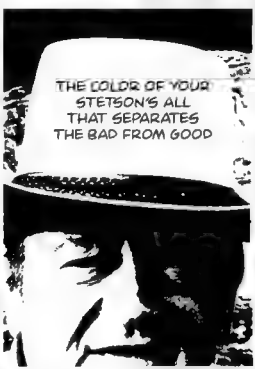


SIT OUTSIDE THE GUTTED GENERAL STORE AND PLAY.



BUT EVERY PLAYBACK SMUDGES THEM TO GRAY.

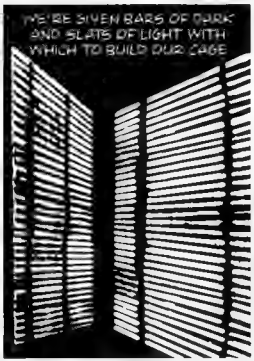




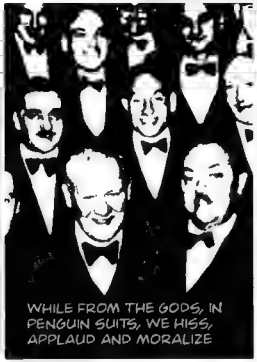
THERE'S FLECKS OF BLOOD UPON A BLACK BERET.

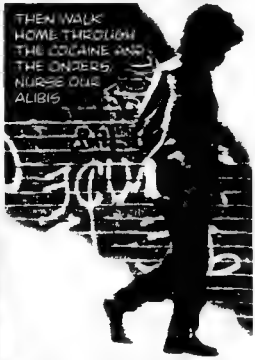
NIGHT AND DAY
(Cole Porter)
ERROLL GARNER
CURY RECORD CORPORATION. MADE IN U.S.A.
AND WHITE LES ON BLACK VINYL TEACH HOW EBONIES AND IVORIES

THEY FIND THEY HAVEN'T ANYTHING TO SAY,



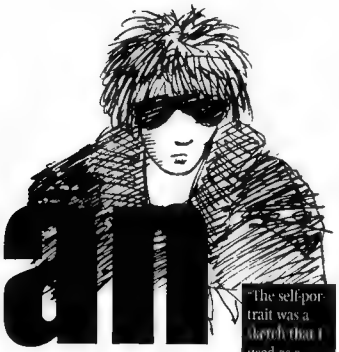
WHERE RIGHT AND WRONG MAKE WEARY CABARET



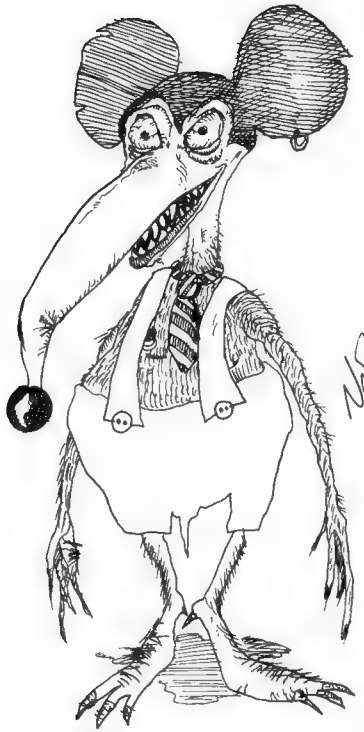


AND IN THE CHIAROSCURO STEAL AWAY.

Neil Gaiman



"The self-portrait was a sketch that I used as a basis for a page-long comic congratulating Brian Hibbs on the fifth anniversary of his comic store, Comix Experience."



"One of the two drawings I've done in the last year to order. The other was the opening screen to a security program called SATAN."

Following page:

"This was a try-out page I did for my 24 hour comic, some years ago. I was experimenting with techniques, and here you see me discovering that the Feiffer confessional technique with nice simple cartoony faces is a hell of a lot harder than it looks. I only did this page, so never quite got to find out who the young lady was, nor who she was talking to, nor what they were doing."

Sketchbook

I DON'T NORMALLY DO STUFF LIKE THIS. LIKE THAT. OH YES. I KNOW I LOOK LIKE A CYCLE SLUT BUT YOU SHOULD SEE ME AT HOME...
HA! ANYONE EVER TOLD YOU YOU'RE CUTE?
NO REALLY. YOU ARE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING HERE. I'M A HAPPILY MARRIED WOMAN...
TWO CUTE KIDS. A HUSBAND. NORMAL FAMILY LIFE.
I LIKE YOU. I REALLY DO...
WHEN I WAS A KID I WAS MOLESTED I WAS ANOREXIC AS A TEENAGER AND BULIMIC. FINGERS DOWN THE THROAT ALL THAT...
MY HUSBAND TOOK ME AWAY FROM THAT SHIT. I CAN'T FORGET THAT...
MY HUSBAND CARED ABOUT ME WHEN NO-ONE ELSE DID. NOT EVEN ME...
WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?
OH YES... LIKE THAT.. WITH YOUR FINGER...

Dear Rick
In my dream last night I was a Body inspector.
It was my job to look for bodies.
KNOCK KNOCK
13
I went in this terrace of houses, Row by row.
In one house the man was nervous and gave me coffee.
OPEN UP! BODY INSPECTOR!

He didn't have a body anywhere, though.
2
Finally I went to the chip shop on the corner
FISH & CHIP
OPEN
Under the Fryer was the stiff body of a small girl.
They said someone had left her there. They didn't know what to do. They hid it.
I told them off.
It is very unhygienic.
Sorry.
Body Inspectors are important.

Left and below left:

"This was done more recently for Rick Veitch's RARE BIT FIENDS. I woke up from the dream in question, grabbed a piece of paper and drew it. Then, as is rather the way of dreams, I forgot all about it, two-page comic and all. When Joe Pruett asked for some sketchbook stuff, my trusty assistant brought me a file on which she had written 'Pieces of paper with drawings on them', and this was in there. Rick said he was happy for it to see print here and that you should all rush out and buy Rare Bit Fiends."

Below:

"Every now and again I find myself consumed by an urge to draw. I usually get this out of my system by drawing postcards which I then send to people, and never see again. Sometimes there are whole series of Cards – the 'Father Christmas and Mister Hyde' sequence is one of which I am still very fond. For some reason I kept a very bad photocopy of these two."

Suburban Nightmares

MISTER FORD

PART ONE • STORY MANCOCK AND CHERKAS • SCRIPT LARRY MANCOCK • ART MICHAEL CHERKAS

PSSSSHH...
...
!?!

WHAT...?
RICKEY?
MOM, LOOK—SOMEONE'S MOVING INTO THE GAMBLE HOUSE—
—AT 3:30 IN THE MORNING?
THERE'S NO ONE OUT THERE...
BUT, MOM—THEY WERE THERE JUST A MINUTE AGO!
BETTER GET BACK TO BED, RICKEY. C'MON, LET'S GO...
MOM?

I was only ten the summer Mr. Ford moved into the neighbourhood...
WHO WANTS MORE BACON?
SIZZLE!
... AND IN OTHER NEWS: A NUMBER OF...
RICKEY! DON'T FEED THE DOG!
SLURP!
... PLEASANTVILLE RESIDENTS REPORTED SEEING THREE...
ANYBODY HEAR THE WEATHER?
...BRIGHTLY-LIT "FLYING SAUCERS" LAST NIGHT...
HARVEY?...
... ONE EYEWITNESS CLAIMS THE UFOs PERFORMED...
POP
DARN! LATE AGAIN WE'VE GOT TO GET A MOVE ON!
... AERIAL ACROBATICS, LANDED BRIEFLY IN SUNNYSIDE PARK...
...THEN TOOK OFF AT INCREDIBLY HIGH SPEED...
RICKEY WAS SLEEPWALKING AGAIN LAST NIGHT—
... INTO THE NIGHT SKY... AUTHORITIES ARE REFUSING...
-ARE YOU FEE
OKAY THIS
MORNING,
T?
...TO COM
NOW THE
I WASN'T DREAMING! THERE WERE MOVING
BIG FAT GUYS CARRYING BOXES AND-AND

REMEMBER — GO STRAIGHT TO SCHOOL AFTER YOU FINISH YOUR DELIVERIES! I DON'T WANT ANY MORE CALLS FROM YOUR PRINCIPAL!
WE MIGHT BE LATE AGAIN. I'VE GOT A TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION MEETING. SO YOU BETTER HAVE A SNACK — AN APPLE AND SOME CRACKERS!
YEAH, MOM! RIGHT, DAD...
WOOF! WOOF!
...JEEZ...

THEY NEVER BELIEVE ME! JUST 'CAUSE I GET BAD DREAMS SOMETIMES DOESN'T MEAN I ALWAYS GET THEM!
!!
DANGER

I KNEW IT! SOMEONE DID MOVE IN...

...WAIT 'TIL I TELL MOM!

?

THAT'S HIM?
39
HE'S THE GUY YOU'RE MAKING ALL THIS FUSS ABOUT?
HE MOVED IN DURING THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT A FEW DAYS AGO.
YEAH, SO?
SO WHAT ABOUT THEM?
WHO?
THEM! - OVER THERE IN THE VAN, STUPID!
THERE'S NO ONE THERE!
YEAH, SO... THEY'RE THERE ALL THE TIME. AND IF IT'S NOT THEM, THEN IT'S TWO OTHER GUYS WHO LOOK JUST LIKE THEM!
SO, WHO ARE THEY?
I DUNNO. C.I.A?
THEN, WHO'S HE?
I DUNNO? A SPY, I GUESS.
MAYBE WE SHOULD FIND OUT...

...BUT, DAD!—
—I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHY YOU INSIST ON MAKING UP THESE CRAZY STORIES. IF IT'S ATTEN—
—THERE MAY BE SOMETHING TO WHAT HE'S SAYING, HARVEY. THE YARD OVER THERE DOES SEEM TO BE NEATER... THERE MIGHT BE SOMEONE—
—AND WHAT ABOUT THE WHITE VAN?
THERE IS NO WHITE VAN...
UFOs FOUND
...HERE. LET'S TAKE A LOOK...
...I DON'T SEE ANYONE AT THE HOUSE—AND I CERTAINLY DON'T SEE ANY VAN—WHITE OR ANY OTHER COLOUR!
AW, DAD!
WOOF!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I'M TAKING SCRAPS FOR HIS WALK!
WELL, BE HOME BEFORE IT GETS DARK.
JEEZ...
!!
OH, NO! MRS. GRUBER'S CAT!
SCRAPS!
COME BACK HERE!!
WOOF! WOOF!
MEEOWW!

OH, NO! RIGHT INTO THE NEW GUY'S BACK YARD!
WOOF! WOOF! MMEEEOWWW!
SCRAPS!

SCRAPS?
?
WOOF!

SCRAPS?
I THOUGHT THIS WAS YOUR DOG, YOUNG MAN...
WOOF!

...WON'T YOU COME IN AND JOIN ME? I HAVE A PLATE OF COOKIES.
WOOF!
UH...

..M-MAYBE..
...JUST FOR A MINUTE...
...I-I HAVE TO BE HOME...

...BEFORE DARK.
HERE, HAVE A COOKIE. THEY'RE CHOCOLATE CHIP.

CONTINUED...

HE'S A KILLER, MERCENARY, AND ASSASSIN. HE'S NOT A NICE PERSON. HE SURE AS HELL ISN'T THE GOOD GUY. BUT HE IS THE MAIN CHARACTER. HE'S--
THE PROTAGONIST
IS
FRED
WRITER/INKER/LETTERER
BRADLEY WALTON
PENCILER
MIKE HOFFMAN

THAT'S SOME GRIMACE Y'GOT THERE, PAL.
THANKS.
BET'CHER A REAL TOUGH GUY.
YEAH. I AM
AH BET'CHA AH'M TOUGHER

PROVE IT.

WELL . . .
FEAST YER EYES ON THIS BEAUTY! BET YUH'D THINK TWICE 'BOUT TAKIN' ON A MAN WITH A KNIFE LIKE THIS, HUH?
KNIVES ARE FOR WIMPS.
WHAT?
KNIVES ARE FOR WIMPS, YOU PUNK. ESPECIALLY BIG ONES LIKE THAT. THEY DON'T MAKE ANY NOISE.
ME, I LIKE A NICE, LOUD GUN. THAT'LL BRING EVERYBODY RUNNING, SO I CAN KILL THEM, TOO.
OH.
SO YER A GUN MAN HUH? THEN HAVE A LOOKIT THIS!--
.44 MAGNUM WITH A LASER SIGHT. AH LOVE THE FEAR IN THEIR EYES WHEN THEY SEE THAT LITTLE RED DOT.
THAT'S A SISSY GUN.

AN' HOW D'YUH FIGURE THAT, MR. TOUGH GUY?
WHO NEEDS A LASER SIGHT? A FEW CIVILIAN CASUALTIES NEVER HURT ANYBODY.
AWRIGHT, THEN! Y'THINK YER SO TOUGH?! TOP THIS!
BIG SUCKER POP
CHOMP!
CRUNCH
GULP!
WHATTA YUH SAY TO THAT?

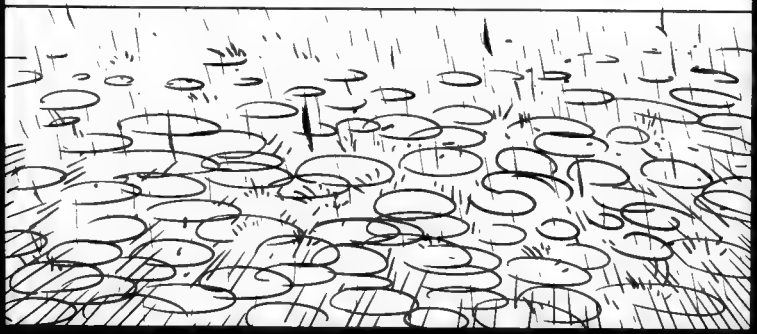
BIG SUCKER POP
CHOMP
CRUNCH
GULP
GAK!!

HAW! HAW! LOOKIT THAT BOY. HE CHOKIN'! WHATTA WIMP!
HE AINT DONE YET, SON.
HUUAGH
OKAY, AH GUESS YUH WIN, YER TOUGHER.
END.

STRIP FOR

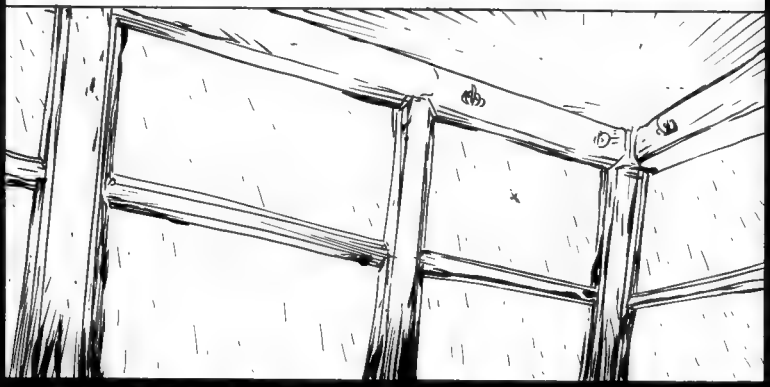
RAIN, SILENT AND IN BETWEEN, THE SOUND OF ONE MILLION RUMBLING DROPS EXPLODING IN WET CIRCLES ON ALL THE SURFACES OF THE WORLD.

ONE MILLION CLICKING CLOCKS IN A MUFFLED CLOSET.



6·30·93

ABOVE, THROUGH THE OBSCURE SHEETS OF WETNESS,
A HUGE ROCKETING PLANE SLIPS ON ITS WET WAY.



RAIN AND ITS NOISY SILENCE AND I COLLAPSE ON MY CARPETED FLOOR.

STRIP FOR

I DREAM OF HER- HER BODY, OPEN,
MOIST, THE HEAT RISING LAZILY, URGENTLY.

AND THE WARM WET COAT I WORE ON MY SHOULDERS,
MY NECK, MY HIPBONES, MY TOES THAT DAY.

6·30·93

VIOLET, CASCADING RAIN. RAIN COATING EVERYTHING WITH A HUMID FILM.
STEALING THE ENERGY FROM YOUR LAZY BONES, PUSHING YOU TO THE FLOOR IN SLOW, SLEEPY SWOOPS.

STRIP

THE LONG SPACES IN BETWEEN, MAKING A SAILOR OF ME,
A PATIENT, ROWING WANDERER OF ME.

I SCRAPE THE OCEAN FLOOR, CAPTURED LIKE SOME UNDERWATER THING.

LIKE MY CARPETED FLOOR, LOWDOWN, SMOOTH, AND SLUMBERING.

THE LONGEST WEEK OF MY LIFE.

The Sad Case of Professor Woodbury

by Mark Ricketts, inspired by Moebius' cover art

A gyroscope malfunction had set Professor Woodbury adrift in a dirigible Windwalker over a man-made plasma ocean created during the Horyna revolt. The water and liquid nutrient storage sacks above his head nearly depleted, he would have to attempt a landing, no matter how dangerous. His only hope was to reach one of the abandoned military outposts constructed on stilts high above the ion crackle. Woodbury had started to hallucinate - a sting from some kind of winged poison jellyfish had affected his vision - reducing the outpost platforms to dark shapes that seemed to bubble and molt like lava whenever he approached for a landing. Incontinent from fear and exhaustion, he circled one platform for more than three hours while babbling to his deceased wife about her drinking problem.

"Relax. Let your mind roam free."

"Specs" adjusted his glasses and leaned out of the lone Quonset hut still standing in the deserted settlement. "Kozinski, looky this!" he cried. Cheroot clenched between his teeth, Kozinski dug his head deeper into the pillow on his hammock and squinted his eyes through the smoke.

"What is it, Specs, another one those flyin' globbers?" Kozinski studied the skull he'd drawn over the face of Miss February nailed to the wall.

"It's a Windwalker! Swear to God!" Specs cried out, rushing toward the platform. Kozinski flung himself from the hammock, knocking into the potbelly stove standing in the corner and sending a cast iron frying pan crashing onto his bare feet.

"You have nothing to fear."

Specs flapped his arms like an enraged stork in an effort to guide the Professor's descent onto the platform. Kozinski hobbled out of the hut toward Specs with an iron hook and a coil of rope. "Stop gawkin', dickweed," Kozinski yelled, flicking Specs' ear. "Give me a hand!" Specs adjusted his glasses with a twitch of his nose and tied the rope to the handle on the underside of the platform. Kozinski twirled the hook like a cowboy swinging a lariat and let fly. The hook caught the Windwalker's frame, along with part of Woodbury's arm. As Kozinski and Specs pulled the teetering craft closer to the surface, the cage holding the Professor snapped open, loosening one of the metal clips that connected the cage to the balloon. He clutched the frame in panic, reaching frantically to return the catch to its locked position, but instead tumbled headfirst into the barbed fence surrounding the platform. Struggling to escape the metal thorns that tightened around him like a quilled python, the needles tearing through his clothes and flesh, the frenzied man fought to pull himself free. As blood streamed from his forehead, impairing his vision, he crawled toward Kozinski and Specs as they wrestled with the Windwalker.

"What are you thinking right now?"

Kozinski held the Windwalker's cage steady as Specs climbed inside. "I can steer this bitch!" shouted Specs over the roar of the wind. "Damn right you will..." Kozinski barked, lashing himself to the outside of the cage. Professor Woodbury reached the craft only to be kicked in the face by Kozinski just as it lurched into the air. He watched the Windwalker slowly drift away from the outpost, straining under the weight of the two men. Suddenly, the cage carrying Kozinski and Specs tore loose from the balloon and dropped into the plasma bath with a blinding splash of light. The shrieks, quick and shrill, echoed for a moment before dying away. Horrified, the Professor closed his eyes. When he opened them again he was no longer on his knees at the abandoned outpost, but strapped to a machine, his face bathed in the green light of its readouts. After a few disoriented moments he recognized the worn black leather couch and the Lucien Freud print that decorated the office of his old friend and colleague, Dr. Gerald Mitchell.

"What are you thinking, Woodbury?" A round, bearded face leaned into the green light.

"The technology is incredible! The Windwalker flight was terrific, and I saw people, they were so...alive !" Woodbury thought a moment. "It really felt as if my flesh was being torn when I hit the barbed wire, you know?"

"Yes, I saw it all," Dr. Mitchell replied, patting a small video monitor. "I'll replay the video after the session is over. The graphics are a bit primitive, but..."

"You could have canceled the program before I fell, you sadistic bastard!"

"Calm down, Woody."Dr. Mitchell examined the Professor's eyes with an instrument that spread the lids apart, a pulsating beam searching for abnormalities in his irises. "There are a variety of possibilities to the Windwalker program. However, your characteristic mechanisms, fear, anxiety, even joy - pathways to the preconscious, in short - drive the action."

"Oh yeah, my ego, id, inner child, and, of course, my mother was there to persecute me, with you at the helm, right?"

"What if I said that this session has been extremely helpful and, well, revealing. "

"Look, Mitchell, I came here to fulfill a bargain. Your dean said you needed volunteers and I want the chair on the grad committee. I expect you to conduct this test in a professional manner."

"These tests are very sensitive, Woody. It's no coincidence you were pressured into becoming a part of this particular experiment. I needed a guinea pig whose habits I was familiar with. Ready for more?"

"Do I have a choice?"

"We're going to accelerate the program." Dr. Mitchell tapped at the keyboard connected to the back of the machine. "The patterns will change at random. We may stir up an emotional beehive, Woody, so don't be surprised if something delicate buzzes to the surface."

"You love torturing me, don't you?" The Professor jerked back into the cushioned seat.

"I can stop this at any time..." Dr. Mitchell's voice trailed off. Woodbury closed his eyes tightly, feeling a slight tingling sensation at the base of his skull. "Good God, Mitchell, you sound like Marion."

When the Professor opened his eyes he was soaring through blue sky in a dirigible Windwalker.

"It's like sailing to heaven, isn't it, Henry?"

The Professor turned to see his wife, Marion, flying in a Windwalker beside him. Against the sun's light, with her beige jumpsuit, pale skin, and blonde hair she was almost invisible.

"Marion?" he called out to her in disbelief. She vanished as the Professor was immersed in the milky white of a cumulus cloud.

"You know she's having an affair?" a voice echoed from his left.

"You." As the cloud dissipated the Professor recognized Specs standing beside him on an outpost platform. He casually swirled a snifter of brandy, gazing up at the two Windwalkers circling above them.

"She's like a rabbit," Specs turned his gaze to look over at Professor Woodbury," ...or should I say,they are like rabbits. You should do something about that wife of yours before the scandal spreads campus wide." Specs took a sip of his brandy, then spread his lips apart to expose clenched teeth.

" Calm down, Woody, I'm attempting to slow down the program."

Specs smiled as the Professor buried his face in his hands.

"I told you Marion was too young and pretty for you, but you were the brilliant scholar and she the adoring student." Another voice sounded from behind the Professor, who turned to see the misty outline of Kozinski gradually solidify. "You should have given her the high hard one and left it at that." He advanced slowly, his figure shimmering like a holograph.

"Do you want me to pull you out?"

Specs laughed quietly while filling a syringe with brandy.

As Kozinski stared into his eyes, Woodbury was instantly enveloped in a tidal wave of memories, smells, voices, tastes. The Professor trembled.

Kozinski took a deep bow like a proud magician, and when he arose he had transformed into Marion. Her hair was in flames, her skin beginning to crackle and hiss as fire licked her face. "Professor, there's a gyroscope malfunction in your Windwalker. You're losing control. You're going to crash. You're going to die," Specs whispered and injected warm liquid into Woodbury's arm.

Marion, the rictus of a smile on her scorched face, blew a kiss.

"Mitchell, she wants me dead!" the Professor cried out, grasping tightly to the metal bars of the balloon's dangling cage as the Windwalker went into an uncontrollable spin. On the platform below, Kozinski lifted a hook with rope trailing behind it that sailed toward the professor. The hook connected, catching the side of the Windwalker, and the rope pulled taut. A stiff line lead from the Windwalker, which had stopped spinning, to the side of the outpost platform. The professor's sight became fuzzy and the three figures on the platform appeared to merge into one. "I've got you, Professor." Though it was clearly Specs holding on to the Windwalker's frame, the voice was Dr. Mitchell's.

"We'll get you out of this." Kozinski said as he held onto the other side.

Standing on the edge of the outpost platform, Marion tied a black scarf around her head and put on a pair of sunglasses. She paused for a moment, then turned and walked away. The three men watched helplessly as the Windwalker cage separated from the balloon, sending them windmilling downward. Suddenly the professor's eyes filled with bright light, then darkness.

Dr. Mitchell tore the VR headgear off the Professor.

"Marion's trying to kill me!" the Professor cried out as Dr. Mitchell slapped his face.

"What are you talking about, Woody, Marion's been dead for over a month now."

"What?! What are you saying?" The professor tried to focus his eyes as he fell forward, hanging from his straps.

"Marion died in a car accident, Henry."

"Oh... no..."

"We can begin to work through it now."

"You don't understand."

"You can work through this..."

"I killed them."

"What are you talking about?"

" The two men... the ones that tried to pull Marion from the crash. The explosion! Oh my God, Mitchell... I killed them."

"First of all, you weren't even present when Marion died, and I'm a bit more qualified to interpret th..."

"Don't you see," tears streamed down Professor Woodbury's face. "I only meant to kill her."

C'MERE, NIKKI HOLD STILL!
YOU'VE GOT INK EVERYWHERE. STICK OUT YOUR TONGUE
NO I.. EWWW!
WOULD YOU STOP IT! I AM NOT A CHILD
JUST TRYING TO HELP
WELL, QUIT..
"--YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH TONIGHT ALREADY!"
DOMINIQUE:
GIRL'S NIGHT OUT
Lyrics: Charles & Lisa Moore
Visuals: Gene Gonzales

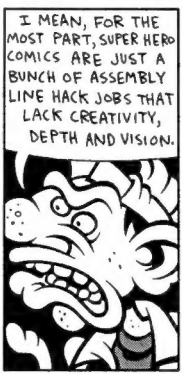
YOU LOOK FAMILIAR
WHAT?!
I SAID YOU LOOK FAMILIAR! YOU WITH THE BAND?
KINDA
I'D LOVE TO MEET 'EM.
SO WOULD I
HEY YOU THINK MAYBE AFTER THE SHOW, YOU COULD INTRODUCE ME TO 'EM? MAYBE WE CAN ALL FIND SOME, Y'KNOW... PARTY FAVORS
"PARTY FAVORS?" WHAT ARE YOU-- A NARC?
YEAH RIGHT GOOD ONE.
AW MAN--NO WONDER YOU LOOK FAMILIAR! YOU LOOK JUST LIKE THEIR MANAGER! SHE YOU SISTER?
HEY-! MY NAME'S ROCKET AND YOU'RE ?
NOT INTERESTED
HEY, BABY GLAD YOU MADE IT
WOULDN'T HAVE MISSED IT, MAMA

SO, THIS IS.. JABBANYRM?
OH, BABY THEY'RE JUST HAVING AN 'OFF' NIGHT
"OFF NIGHT" MAMA.. THEY SUCK!
IT'S THIS LAME CROWD, NIKKI NO ENERGY
"--JUST LOOK AT 'EM, BABY NOTHIN' BUT A BUNCHA POSERS FROM THE 'BURBS--
--TRYIN' TO BE SOMETHIN' THEY AIN'T.
HMM. IMAGINE THAT. SO..WHICH ONE ARE YOU SLEEPING WITH?
NIKKI SINCLAIR! I SHOULD BE OFFENDED.
"--IF YOU MUST KNOW, IT'S THE BASS PLAYER HIS NAME'S TY."
"CUTE LITTLE VEGETABLE. AIN'T HE, MAMA?"
"NOT A BRAIN IN HIS HEAD, BABY"
ANYWAY, YOU OUGHTTA HEAR THEIR DEMO. BEEN SHMOOZING MY FANNY OFF TO GET IT HEARD BY THE RIGHT A&R FOLKS.
GOT A FEW NIBBLES THOUGH
ALWAYS HUSTLIN' AREN'T YOU, MAMA? I'M GLAD IT'S LEGAL THIS TIME.
I'M HAPPY FOR YOU, REALLY

LOOK, NIKKI, I GOT TO SETTLE UP WITH THE MANAGER ABOUT OUR SHARE OF THE DOOR. STAY HERE ENJOY...
C'MON BACKSTAGE AFTER THE SET.
"MAMA, I HOPE YOU REALIZE HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU TO HAVE SAT THROUGH ANOTHER HALF HOUR OF JABBAWYRM."
"THOUGH I GOTTA ADMIT, I WAS IMPRESSED THE CROWD HUNG OUT UNTIL AFTER THE SET. THOUGH AT THE TIME, I DIDN'T KNOW WHY."
AGAINST THE WALL, BABE! MOVE!!
"FOR A SECOND, I THOUGHT THEY ACTUALLY HAD FANS."
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALK... hhh!!
AGAINST THE WALL!
THIS AIN'T NO GAME, LADY!
THAT'S MY MOTHER, ASSHOLE!!

"NOW, NIKKI, I DIDN'T TELL YOU TO GO IN THERE ALL HALF-COCKED."
POLICE... FREEZE...
"DON'T EVEN START, MOTHER. HE WAS HURTING YOU--"
"--HOW WAS I SUPPOSED TO KNOW I WALKED INTO THE MIDDLE OF A BUST."
"I TOLD YOU THEY SUCKED! THE AUDIENCE WAS NOTHING BUT NARCS!"
"I KNEW THEY COULDN'T MAKE A LIVING PLAYING MUSIC."
OH WELL, LIVE AND LEARN, BABY--
--LEAST THAT LITTLE COP DIDN'T PRESS CHARGES.
ALL THESE YEARS, I GET FINGERPRINTED FOR SOMETHING I DIDN'T DO. C'MERE, YOU STILL GOT INK ON YOU.
OLICE DEPARTMEN
FINE BE THAT WAY.
HOW 'BOUT SOME BREAKFAST?
...
MAYBE. YOU PAYING?
SURE, BABY. LET'S GO.
UH, NIKKI... THINK YOU COULD SPOT ME A FEW BUCKS?
END!

CHARLIE SELDOM IN ENCOUNTER with a SUPER HERO FANBOY


I MEAN, FOR THE MOST PART, SUPER HERO COMICS ARE JUST A BUNCH OF ASSEMBLY LINE HACK JOBS THAT LACK CREATIVITY, DEPTH AND VISION.

MR. MAMOULIAN

PANDA

BOLAND 7·3 88

HI
IT'S ME, SUZY.
YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING WHY I'M DRESSED AS A PANDA.
WELL, ER....
I'M GOING TO A PARTY AND I FOUND THIS GREAT COSTUME IN THE THEATRE DESIGN DEPARTMENT AND I THOUGHT... DAMN! DID YOU SEE WHO JUST WALKED IN?
IT'S DICK SPRINGER! THE GUY'S A PAIN IN THE BUTT! MAYBE IF I PUT MY HEAD BACK ON HE WON'T KNOW IT'S ME!
YOU PROBABLY DON'T KNOW HIM... HE TEACHES FOUNDATION AT MY ART-SCHOOL... JEEZUS! HE THINKS HE OWNS ME! HE THINKS ROTHKO IS GOD!!
HE WON'T STOP PESTERING ME... HE CAME KNOCKING ON MY DOOR THE OTHER NIGHT... IN THE MIDDLE OF A RECORDING! JUST BECAUSE I MOVED INTO HIS FLAT FOR A FEW WEEKS! I HAD TO GET AWAY FROM LINDA!
SHE'S GONE ALL WEIRD! SHE GOT RELIGION. I COULDN'T TALK TO HER ANY MORE. ALL KINDA' WEIRD PEOPLE WITH WEIRD NAMES KEPT COMING ROUND... SITTING ON THE FLOOR AND, KINDA', CHANTING! I CAN'T STAND PEOPLE WHO SIT ON THE FLOOR! REALLY SHITTY!
ANYWAY, I'M AT CLIFF'S NOW. HE'S OKAY. HE SITS IN CHAIRS LIKE NORMAL PEOPLE! I'VE GOT A STUDIO THERE... AND RECORDING EQUIPMENT. HE'S A MARQUIS OR SOMETHING. BUBBLES IS REALLY PISSED ABOUT IT. BUT SPRINGER FOUND OUT WHERE I LIVE!
I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND ME TELLING YOU ALL THIS, I MEAN... HELL! I THINK HE'S SPOTTED ME! GOD, HE'S SO BORING! I GOTTA GO! IT'S BEEN NICE TALKING TO YOU...
HOW'S RICKENBACKER?
SHE'S MY BEST STUDENT, YOU KNOW. VERY TALENTED... A LOT OF POTENTIAL THERE. BUT SHE HAS TO BE CHANNELLED... MOLDED... NURTURED.
DO YOU LIKE ROTHKO?
DIDN'T HE KILL HIMSELF?